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Illegal migrants issue: PM Modi slams Congress, says BJP reviving Assam after years of neglect



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Can't be forced to return, faces political assassination: Sheikh Hasina

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Neeraj hits 90m high but no end to country's doping woes



INBRIEF

Air India's Mumbai-bound B777 plane returns to Delhi due to right engine issue

NEW DELHI: A Mumbai-bound Air India's Boeing 777 aircraft returned to the national capital due to a right engine issue on Monday morning, according to sources. The plane, carrying around 335 people, was airborne for nearly an hour before returning to Delhi. The aircraft made an emergency landing, they added. "The crew operating flight AI887 from Delhi to Mumbai on 22 December decided to return to Delhi shortly after take-off due to a technical issue as per standard operating procedure," Air India said in a statement. The aircraft landed safely at Delhi and the passengers and crew have disembarked, the airline said and regretted the inconvenience caused due to this unforeseen situation.

Delhi's air quality 'very poor'

NEW DELHI: Thick grey haze shrouded Delhi on Monday morning, with the air quality remaining in the 'very poor' category with a reading of 366, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The Air Quality Index (AQI) at seven air quality monitoring stations was 'severe', with Narela logging the highest reading at 418. According to the CPCB, an AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe'. Delhi's air quality is likely to remain 'very poor' for the next three days. It is expected to oscillate between 'very poor' and 'severe' categories during the subsequent six days, according to the Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS). The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the current average wind speed, which is less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for the dispersion of pollutants.

Gold Rates in Hyderabad Soar to Unprecedented Highs on Monday

HYDERABAD: Gold prices in Hyderabad surged to record levels on Monday, reflecting both domestic and international market trends. The price of 24-carat gold crossed Rs.6,600 per gram, while 22-carat gold reached Rs.6,050 per gram, marking an unprecedented high for the city. Market analysts attributed the rise to a combination of factors, including weakening rupee, increasing global demand, and geopolitical uncertainties affecting international gold prices. Jewellery retailers reported a significant spike in enquiries, though purchases remained cautious due to the steep rates. Silver prices also saw an uptick, with 1 kg silver trading at Rs.78,500, up from Rs.77,200 on Friday. Traders advised buyers to monitor market trends before making large purchases. The sharp rise in gold prices has triggered concerns among investors and households planning to buy gold for upcoming weddings and festivals.

Revanth releases Gram Panchayat representatives' handbook



HYDERABAD (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Monday formally released the "Gram Panchayat Public Representatives' Handbook", a comprehensive guide aimed at strengthening grassroots governance across the State. The event was attended by Ministers Seethakka, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Pongutti Srinivas Reddy, Jupally Krishna Rao, Konda Surekha, Vakiti Srihari and Azharuddin, along with Government Advisor Sudarshan Reddy, Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao and senior officials. Prepared by the Telangana Institute of Rural Development

(TGIRD), the 292-page handbook provides detailed and practical information on the Panchayat Raj Act-2018, outlining the powers, duties and responsibilities of Gram Panchayats.

It serves as a ready reference for elected representatives to effectively discharge their roles and improve delivery of services at the village level.

The State Government announced that the hand-

book will be distributed to all Gram Panchayat public representatives, with the objective of enhancing administrative clarity, legal awareness and accountable local governance.

Cold wave conditions grip parts of Telangana



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana continued to reel under cold wave conditions on Monday, with some areas recording single-digit minimum temperatures. Kohin in Sangareddy district was the coldest at 5°C, followed by Reddy Palle in Moinabad mandal of Ranga Reddy district at 6.9°C. Out of 33 districts, 17 recorded minimum temperatures below 10°C.

Other low temperatures included Sirpur (U) in Komaram Bheem Asifabad at 7°C, Arili in Adilabad at 8.3°C, Nawabpet in Vikarabad at 8.7°C, Pothareddipet in Siddipet at 9.5°C, Damarancha in Medak at 9.5°C, and Gandhari in Kamareddy at 9.7°C. Hyderabad and surrounding suburbs also witnessed a significant drop

in night temperatures, with dense fog reported in parts of Ranga Reddy, Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Medak, Adilabad, and Komaram Bheem Asifabad districts.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange alert for Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Nirmal, Sangareddy, Medak, and Kamareddy, where minimum temperatures are expected to range between 5°C and 10°C until December 26. A yellow alert has been issued for districts including Hanumakonda, Hyderabad, Jagtial, Karimnagar, Ranga Reddy, Siddipet, Vikarabad, Warangal, and others, where minimums are likely between 11°C and 15°C.

Rahul should decide on leadership change in Karnataka: CM Siddaramaiah



MYSURU (TSIT): Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi should decide on the leadership crisis in the state.

Talking to media persons at his native place, Mysuru, Siddaramaiah said, "We are committed to whatever decision Rahul Gandhi takes."

Expressing dismay over the media discussing leadership change, he said, "Why is there a need to ask so many questions?

I have already spoken about this in the Legislative Assembly. There is no need to dis-

cuss it again." Recently, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah declared on the floor of the House that he would complete his tenure.

Responding to media questions about former minister and Congress MLA K.N. Rajanna meeting Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar last

week, the Chief Minister said, "D.K. Shivakumar is the party president.

What is wrong with meeting the party president?" Slapping the Congress, the Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly, R. Ashoka, stated on Monday, "On one hand, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is repeatedly asserting that he will continue as CM as long as the party high command wishes, while Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President D.K. Shivakumar claims that an agreement has already been reached with the high command.

CM Naidu directs measures to curb belt shops, introduce liquor ID

AMARAVATI (TSIT): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday instructed the Excise Department to

study Haryana's sub-lease system to curb the menace of 'belt shops' or unauthorised liquor outlets in the state. At a departmental review meeting, the Chief Minister emphasised strict action against illegal outlets and asked officials to explore policy measures to tackle the issue effectively.

Officials noted that the proliferation of belt shops

should focus on healthy growth rather than just revenue generation and suggested reviewing shop allocation through lottery, application fees, liquor identification numbers, and retailer margins.

Sridhar Babu Slams KCR, Says Congress Govt Creating 'Hope Not Hype'

Telangana IT and Industries Minister Sridhar Babu emphasized that the Congress government is driving real growth and investments in the state, attracting Rs.3.4 lakh crore in two years, ending the "gate-pass culture" and creating a transparent, performance-driven environment for industries and youth employment.



added that while previous MoUs often failed to materialise, the present government has already attracted Rs.3.4 lakh crore in investments within two years.

Highlighting initiatives like Bharat Future City and the Warangal Textile Park, Sridhar Babu said the government is focused on building world-class infra-

structure and completing unfinished projects. Citing RBI data, he noted that Telangana ranked first among major states in per capita income for 2024-25. He concluded that under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's leadership, Telangana is progressing steadily toward becoming a global industrial hub.

ments laid the foundation for

Telangana's growth in IT, aerospace, defence, and life sciences. "If Telangana is leading in these sectors today, it is because of the ecosystem built by earlier Congress governments," he stated.

Citing export figures, he said IT exports grew from Rs.2.43 lakh crore to Rs.3.23 lakh crore in just one-and-a-half years under the present government, compared to the growth from Rs.54,000 crore to Rs.2.43 lakh crore over nine years earlier. He also referred to recent data released by the Reserve Bank of India, which ranked Telangana first among major states in per capita income for 2024-25, at Rs.3.87 lakh.

CM Stalin opens school buildings across 20 districts

CHENNAI (TSIT): In an initiative to encourage reading habits, the Chief Minister, MK Stalin, laid a foundation stone for the construction of a new building for the Mayiladuthurai District Central Library at an estimated cost of Rs.4.40 crore.

According to the School Education Department, a total of 392 new classrooms, four laboratory buildings, 16 toilets for both girls and boys, eight drinking water facilities, two district government model school buildings, and hostel buildings in 60 government schools across 20 districts for Rs.113.68 crore have been constructed.

buildings for schools, including model schools and hostel buildings constructed by the School Education Department for a total of Rs.210.17 crore. Additionally, library buildings built for Rs.19.72 crore have also been inaugurated.

According to the School Education Department, a total of 392 new classrooms, four laboratory buildings, 16 toilets for both girls and boys, eight drinking water facilities, two district government model school buildings, and hostel buildings in 60 government schools across 20 districts for Rs.113.68 crore have been constructed.

PFI was trying to procure arms from neighbouring countries: NIA counsel to Delhi court

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency told a Delhi court that the Popular Front of India was trying to procure arms from the neighbouring countries and give arms training to its cadres, a special public prosecutor of the agency has said. The submissions were made before Special Judge (NIA) Prashant Sharma on Saturday, who was hearing arguments on charges against 20 accused Popular Front of India (PFI) leaders. Mediapersons were not allowed to cover the in-camera court proceedings.

Speaking to reporters outside the court on Saturday, NIA's special public prosecutor Rahul Tyagi said he argued before the court that PFI leaders were trying to procure arms from neighbouring countries and give arms training to its cadres.



On the allegations against the PFI leaders, Tyagi said, "They were also sending their cadres to Syria to learn tactics from ISIS so that

they could be implemented in India. They organised specific hit squads which were keeping a list of BJP, RSS and VHP leaders, and conducting surveillance on them."

The prosecutor alleged that the group was formed with the motive of radicalising the youth. "The case against the PFI and its leadership is that they formed the organisa-

tion to radicalise Muslim youth with a view to establishing a caliphate in India and to establish Sharia law," Tyagi said.

"They were organising camps, giving them arms training, radicalising them, and training them to wage 'Jihad' against India, for which they were collecting funds," the prosecutor said, adding that these submissions were made before the court.

The court has posted the matter for further proceedings on December 23.

In September 2022, the Central government banned the PFI and several of its associates for five years under a stringent anti-terror law, accusing them of having "links" with global terror groups such as ISIS.

BJP pushing 'one nation, one businessman' agenda, promoting monopolies: Akhilesh

LUCKNOW: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday accused the BJP-led government of working towards a "one nation, one businessman" agenda, alleging that it was systematically promoting monopolies in the country's economic and political life.

In a post on X, Yadav claimed that the BJP wanted to concentrate businesses in the hands of a few industrialists to ensure ease of political funding. "Moving towards 'one nation, one businessman' is the BJP government's secret agenda," he said.

"Under the principle of 'one business, one source of domination', BJP leaders want to bring every sector of the country's economy into the hands of a select few so that

they do not have to go to different places for funds," Yadav alleged.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister further accused the ruling party of prioritising its "greed for money" and placing "obedient puppets" in the government and party organisation to meet political and financial objectives.

Yadav warned that monopolistic tendencies were dangerous for any country, irrespective of whether they emerged in the political, economic or social spheres. "For any nation, monopoly in any field proves fatal, be it politics, the economy or social dominance," he said. Alleging that the BJP government was attempting to dismantle other industrial houses to transfer eco-

nomic control to a handful of favoured groups, Yadav said such efforts would lead to "serious and dangerous consequences".

"The next step will be uncontrolled profiteering, rising inflation and ultimately massive corruption," he claimed.

He further alleged that laws and regulations would be altered to benefit monopolistic companies, consumers would be arbitrarily charged, and workers would face increased exploitation under a "less pay, more work" formula. "Neither farmers will be heard nor the PDA (Picchda, Dalit, Alpsarkhyak) society. Nearly 95 per cent of the population will become victims of severe exploitation," Yadav said.

Centre seeks report on elephant deaths in Assam, assures strict Aravalli protection

GOSABA: Union Minister Bhupender Yadav on Sunday said the Centre has sought a report on the death of elephants in a train collision in Assam's Hailakandi district and asserted that no relaxation has been granted on the protection of the Aravalli region. Speaking to reporters after meetings on Project Elephant and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) at the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve in West Bengal, Yadav said all states have been asked to monitor elephant movement along railway tracks and coordinate with forest departments. "Railway authorities have been directed to work with state forest departments on elephant movement along the tracks. A report on elephant deaths in Assam has been sought," the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change said. Seven elephants

SHANTI Bill bulldozed in Parliament not only for 'TRUMP but also for ADANI': Congress

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Saturday took a swipe at the Modi government over the passage of the SHANTI Bill, saying it was "bulldozed" in Parliament not only for "TRUMP but also for ADANI".

Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, shared a screenshot of a media report on X, which claimed that the Adani group plans a nuclear energy foray after private firms get a go-ahead to enter the sector.

Parliament on Thursday passed the nuclear energy Bill, with the Rajya Sabha giving its nod to the legislation seeking to open the tightly-controlled civil nuclear sector for private participation.

"SHANTI was bulldozed

through in Parliament not only for TRUMP (The Reactor Use Management Programme) but also for ADANI (Accelerated Damaging Adhiniyam for Nuclear India)," Ramesh claimed.

The Congress on Saturday alleged that the SHANTI Bill was "bulldozed" in Parliament only to help Prime Minister Narendra Modi restore "SHANTI" with his "once good friend".

Ramesh had said the SHANTI Bill does away with key provisions of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, a concern raised in the United States' National Defence Authorisation Act for 2026.

Stating that US President Donald Trump has

just signed the National Defence Authorisation Act for the US fiscal year 2026, Ramesh had said in a post on X, "The Act is 3,100 pages long. Page 1,912 has a reference to the joint assessment between the United States and India on Nuclear Li-

ability Rules. "Now we know for sure why the Prime Minister bulldozed the SHANTI Bill through Parliament earlier this week that, among other things, did away with key provisions of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, that had

been passed unanimously by Parliament."

"It was to restore SHANTI with his once good friend," the Congress leader said, attaching a copy of the US Act in his post. The SHANTI Act may well be called the TRUMP Act – The Reactor Use and Management Promise Act – Ramesh had claimed.

Speaking on the Bill in Rajya Sabha, Ramesh urged the government not to promote the private sector at the cost of the public sector in building nuclear power infrastructure, and called for encouraging the available indigenous technology to boost the energy capacity in the country.

He also said that private firms cannot be the

growth engine of the nuclear sector as they cannot be brought over the country's PSUs.

The Upper House passed the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill by a voice vote, while rejecting several amendments moved by the opposition members to send the proposed legislation to a parliamentary committee. It was passed in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Replying to a discussion on the Bill, Minister of State for Atomic Energy, Jitendra Singh, said it aims to make India self-reliant in nuclear energy and reduce dependence on other sources of energy.

Centre rejects mining push charge behind Aravalli definition, asserts 'no relaxation'

NEW DELHI: Asserting that 90 per cent of the Aravalli region will remain "protected", the Centre on Sunday rejected claims that the new definition of the Aravalli range will allow large-scale mining and cited a Supreme Court-ordered freeze on new mining leases in the region.

It said a Supreme Court-approved framework provides for stronger protection of the mountain system and places a freeze on new mining leases until a comprehensive management plan is finalised.

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said that the SC-approved definition will bring more than 90 per cent of the Aravalli region under "protected area."

Replying to queries from mediapersons after a meeting on Project Elephant and the National Tiger Conservation Authority in the Sundarbans of West Bengal, Yadav also emphasised that "no relaxation has been granted" with regard to the protection of the Aravalli region and claimed "lies"

have been spread on the issue. "Stop spreading misinformation!" he said in a post on X, amid allegations by the Congress and others that the step will destroy the Aravallis.

"In the total area of 1.44 lakh square kilometres of the Aravalli, mining eligibility can only be in 0.19 per cent of the area. The rest of the entire Aravalli is preserved and protected," said Yadav, the Union minister for environment, forest and climate change on the definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges.

According to the new definition, "Aravalli Hill is any landform in designated Aravalli districts with an elevation of 100 metres or more above its local relief" and an "Aravalli Range is a collection of two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other".

The government, however,

asserted that it is "incorrect to conclude" that all landforms below 100 metres are open for mining.

In an explanation issued amid the controversy over the "100-metre" criterion, the government rejected claims that mining had been permitted in areas below 100 metres and said the restriction applies to entire hill systems and their enclosed landforms and not merely to the hill peak or slope.

It said the definition of the Aravalli hills and range has been standardised across states on the directions of the Supreme Court to remove ambiguity and prevent misuse, particularly practices that allowed mining to continue dangerously close to hill bases. Sources in the Environment Ministry said the Supreme Court, while hearing long-pending cases on illegal mining in the Aravallis, had constituted a committee in May 2024 to recommend a "uniform definition", as different states were following inconsistent criteria while granting mining permissions.

The committee, chaired by the Environment Ministry Secretary and comprising representatives from Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, and Delhi along with technical bodies, found that only Rajasthan had a formally established definition, which it has been following since 2006.

That definition treats landforms rising 100 metres or more above local relief as hills and prohibits mining within the lowest bounding contour enclosing such hills, irrespective of the height or slope of landforms inside the contour, they said.

"People have created confusion that you can mine below the 100 metre elevation in a hill, but it is not so... The bottom area will be protected. And if there is a gap of 500 metres between two hills, then that area will also be considered part of the range. After this definition, more than 90 per cent of the area will be protected," Yadav said.

The minister asserted that the government has taken a number of steps like the

'Green Aravalli' movement for the preservation of the mountain range and is committed to their protection. "Lies are being spread on the (definition) issue," he alleged.

The sources said all four states agreed to adopt this long-standing Rajasthan definition, along with additional safeguards to make it objective and transparent. These include treating hills located within 500 metres of each other as a single range, mandatory mapping of hills and ranges on Survey of India maps before any mining decision and clear identification of core and in-violate areas where mining is prohibited.

The government said the apex court has accepted the committee's recommendation to prohibit mining in core and in-violate areas, including protected areas, eco-sensitive zones, tiger reserves, wetlands and areas close to such sites, while allowing limited exemptions only for critical, strategic and deep-seated minerals in national interest.

Odisha: Minor 'raped' in Bhubaneswar, two arrested

BHUBANESWAR: A 17-year-old girl was allegedly raped at a rented house in Odisha's Bhubaneswar, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place around 2 pm on December 18, and two accused have been arrested, they said.

"The girl was subjected to sexual assault without her consent by two persons in the rented accommodation in the city," a police officer said.

The accused had reportedly promised the girl a data entry operator job and called her to the house to discuss it, he said. A case has been registered in this connection at Shaheed Nagar Police Station, the officer said.

"Both the accused were produced before a court, which forwarded them to judicial custody," he said.

This is the second such incident in Bhubaneswar in a span of 10 days.

Meanwhile, expressing serious concern over the incident, BJD president and Leader of Op-

position in Odisha Assembly Naveen Patnaik alleged that the state capital Bhubaneswar is becoming unsafe for women, as another minor girl was gang raped in Bhubaneswar in broad daylight.

Reacting to the X post of Patnaik, BJP leader Surath Biswal said, "Naveen Babu should first revisit the old crime records of his tenure and compare the timeframe of police action in such sensitive incidents."

Now, under the BJP rule, police take immediate action whenever any such incident happens and arrest the accused persons, he claimed.

sure a safe environment for the people.

The BJD chief advised the BJP government to become alert and take proactive steps to strictly enforce law and order in the state.

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Air India's Mumbai-bound B777 plane suffers engine shutdown; returns to Delhi



NEW DELHI: A Mumbai-bound Air India's Boeing 777 aircraft made an emergency landing in the national capital in less than one hour after taking off due to right engine shutdown on Monday morning, according to sources. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will be conducting a probe and the civil aviation ministry has sought details from Air India about the incident.

The plane, carrying around 335 people, was airborne for nearly an hour before returning to Delhi. The aircraft made an emergency landing, the sources said. "The crew operating flight AI887 from Delhi to Mumbai on 22 December decided to return to Delhi shortly after take-off due

to a technical issue as per standard operating procedure," Air India said in a statement. The aircraft landed safely at Delhi and the passengers and crew have disembarked. The airline said and regretted the inconvenience caused due to this unforeseen situation.

The civil aviation ministry said it has taken note of the Air India incident involving a technical issue shortly after take-off. The ministry

has sought a detailed report from Air India, and DGCA has been directed to conduct a thorough investigation. "The airline has been directed to extend all assistance to passengers and accommodate them on subsequent flights," the ministry said in a post on X. A DGCA official said the plane was involved in an air turn-back as during flap retraction after take-off, the flight crew observed

low engine oil pressure on the right hand engine (engine No.2). "Shortly thereafter, the engine oil pressure dropped to zero. Following the procedure crew shutdown the No.2 engine and aircraft landed safely at Delhi.

"Inspection/rectification is in progress. The incident would be investigated by the Permanent investigation board of the Airline under the supervision of Director Air Safety (NR), DGCA," the official said. According to a source at the DGCA, the review of previous records does not indicate any abnormality in oil consumption. Air India said the plane is undergoing the necessary checks and alternative arrangements have been made to fly the passengers to their destination.

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APPENDIX IV - POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

The undersigned being the authorized officer of Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL), Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Enforcement Rules"), Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) (collectively referred to as the "Borrowers") mention herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers and the public in general that the under signed has taken symbolic / physical possession of the property described herein below in supersize of powers conferred upon him under Sub-section(4) of Section 13 of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in receipt of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby caution not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ACHFL for an amount mention herein under with the interest thereon.

Name of Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) AND Loan Account Number

1) SOMLI BAI (Applicant) 09.07.2025
2) RAMA NAIK (Co-Applicant) Rs. 5,46,609/- (Rupees Five Lakh Forty Six Thousand Six Hundred Nine Only)
LAN No: S119202000083
NPA: 29.06.2025

Description of Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of Property No. 263/241, E Swathi No. 15120401200520069, situated at Measuring 5.70 X 7.00 Sq. Mtrs. i.e. 39.90 Sq. Mtrs., Harakanu Village, Harakanu Grama Panchayat, Harapanhalli, Taluk Vijayanagar Dist. and bounded on: East- Vacant Property; West- Vacant Property; North- Road; South- Vacant Property.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS / CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS
Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction / tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6,8 & 9 of Security (Interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002.
SD/- Date: 23.12.2025
Place: Vijayanagar
Authorised Officer Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PVT. LTD.
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infina, Wakadwadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005, MAHARASHTRA (INDIA).

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Only those making provocative speeches oppose hate speech bill: Siddaramaiah



Mysore: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday defended the Hate Speech Prevention Bill, stating that only those who make provocative speeches are opposing it. Addressing the media in Mysore, he dismissed BJP's allegations that the bill was framed to target specific individuals or parties, asserting that the Act applies equally to everyone.

Questioning the BJP's opposition, the Chief Minister asked whether peace could be established in society through hate speech. He said the bill was introduced solely to maintain peace and brotherhood, especially

at a time when hate speech incidents are on the rise. Siddaramaiah alleged that the BJP's resistance stems from its leaders making provocative statements.

Responding to allegations of embezzlement in the Griha Lakshmi scheme, the Chief Minister clarified that when funds are transferred directly to beneficiaries' accounts, the question of misappropriation does not arise.

He acknowledged that the payments for February and March had not yet been released and assured that the issue would be reviewed and the funds disbursed. "Was it possible to pay Griha Lakshmi assis-

tance for 23 months without money?" he asked.

On AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's statement that no individual is bigger than the party, Siddaramaiah said it was a principle that must be accepted. Regarding speculation about leadership change, he said the decision rests with Rahul Gandhi and the party high command, and the state leadership would abide by whatever decision is taken.

The Chief Minister dismissed media speculation on leadership change, stating that the issue was being unnecessarily discussed despite clarity already given in the Assembly. He also defended party leaders meeting the party president or Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, saying there was nothing wrong with such interactions.

Replying to queries on appointments made during his tenure, Siddaramaiah said it did not matter who made the decision as long as it was taken by the government of the day. On the state budget, he said details would be shared once preparations were complete.

District Congress padayatra against centre stopped by police

Mangaluru, Dec 22: The Dakshina Kannada District Congress Committee staged a protest against the central government by taking out a padayatra in the city, which was stopped by the police at Mallikatte Junction on Monday December 22. As part of the protest, Congress workers and leaders began a padayatra from the Congress Bhavan at Mallikatte towards the district BJP office. However, police intervened at Mallikatte Junction itself and stopped the procession, taking the protesting workers into custody. The Congress had announced the padayatra in protest against the alleged move to change the name and structure of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

The party also condemned what it termed as the misuse of the Enforcement Directorate by the central government in the National Herald case, accusing it of conspiring against senior Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. Several senior leaders participated in the padayatra, including AICC Screening Committee member Vijay Inder Singla, Dakshina Kannada District Congress president Harish Kumar, Manjunath Bhandary, Ivan D'Souza, Mithun Rai and Ramanath Rai, among others. Police stopped the padayatra at Mallikatte Junction and detained the participating Congress workers and leaders, bringing the protest to a halt.

Renaming of MGNREGA targets Gandhiji's legacy, BJP's end has begun: Shivakumar



Bengaluru: Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Centre over the renaming of the MGNREGA rural employment scheme, alleging that the move was an attempt to erase the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and signalling the beginning of the end for the BJP.

Addressing a press conference at the KPCC office, Shivakumar said the BJP had crossed a line by altering a scheme that guarantees employment as a fundamental right under Article 21.

"We never thought the BJP would dare to touch MGNREGA. Now that it has done so, the final days of the BJP have started," he said.

He alleged that the Centre was trying to dismantle a scheme meant

for the poor and described the move as shameful. Shivakumar said the Congress Working Committee meeting scheduled for December 27 would decide the course of the party's agitation against the decision. He added that Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge had called a meeting in Delhi to discuss the issue. The Deputy Chief Minister warned that changes in the funding pattern from 90:10 to 60:40 would make it impossible for states to sustain the scheme, effec-

tively "burying" rural employment. He asserted that both the Congress party and the Karnataka government would fight the decision until the Centre revoked the name change and restored the original structure of the scheme. On the National Herald case, Shivakumar alleged misuse of central agencies, claiming that the Enforcement Directorate had pursued the matter without an FIR and that courts had rejected attempts to file a chargesheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

70th Kannada Rajyotsava celebrated with Kempegowda awards and felicitation ceremony in Bengaluru



Bengaluru: The 70th Kannada Rajyotsava was celebrated in a grand manner by GBA Bangalore East Corporation and the Officers and Employees Kannada Sangha, along with a felicitation ceremony honouring officers, employees, and achievers from various fields. On the occasion, the prestigious Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Award was presented to distinguished achievers as well as dedicated officers and employees.

Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations were held with great enthusiasm, highlighting the use of Kannada as the administrative language in GBA municipalities.

Speakers at the event emphasised that Kannada is a rich and vibrant language, having received eight Jnampith awards, and called upon people to preserve and promote the language by speaking and conducting business in Kannada. Under the leadership and guidance of A. Amit Raj, the Kannada Sangha has been actively working to uphold the language and culture. It was noted that Karnataka

Rajyotsava celebrations were also organised in places such as Nepal, Haridwar, Kashi, and Pahalgam by the Central Kannada Sangha, showcasing the reach and pride of Kannada culture beyond the state. As part of the celebrations, a cultural programme titled Kannada Kahale Sangeet Rasa Sanje Sarigamapa was organised, featuring performances by Kannada Kogile artists. Singers Ganesh Karanth, Varna Chauhan, Bhagashree Gowda, and Qasim Alivara enthralled the audience with their melodic renditions.

Bengaluru to have 175 km metro network by December 2027: DCM DK Shivakumar

Bengaluru: Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar today announced that 175 km of metro line network will be operational in Bengaluru by December 2027. Addressing a press conference after holding a meeting with BMRCL officials on the progress of metro construction, he said, "Our government is working towards easing traffic congestion in the city. Currently, 96 km of metro network is

operational. We have operationalized Yellow line after we assumed office. The 24 km Yellow line has a footfall of 1 lakh passengers. According to the police, traffic has come down by about 30% on the roads along Yellow line."

"We will operationalize 41 km metro network in 2026 and additional 38 km including Airport line by December 2027. With this, Bengaluru

will have a metro network of 175 km. We have plans to extend metro line to Tavarekere, Hosakote, Bidadi, Nelamangala. DPR is being prepared for this," he explained.

"We will call for tender next month for 100 km of metro network under Phase 3, including double decker corridor. We have expedited the project to ease traffic congestion in the city.

On 25th Atal Puraskar to Dr. Govinda Rangarajan, Dr. Chandrashekhar Shetty, Nagaraj : Dr. C. N. Ashwathnarayana



Bengaluru: The Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Foundation will celebrate the 101st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee on this 25th at the Gyanjyothi Hall, said former Deputy Chief Minister and MLA Dr. C. N. Ashwathnarayana.

Speaking at a press conference in the city, he said that the birthday of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is being celebrated as Good Governance Day in the whole of India.

He said that the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Foundation is celebrating

Good Governance Day meaningfully every year in honor of Atal Ji. A program called 'Good Governance in Education' will be organized at the Gyanjyothi in the central part of the city. It will be held from 1 pm to 7 pm that day. It has been divided into two parts, and in one part, a dialogue will be held. A dialogue will be held on public universities, curriculum, and artificial intelligence. He said that 15 experts in the field of education and technology will participate. He said that Sadhguru

Madhusudan Sai Swamigal will inaugurate it. He said that the Atal Puraskar will be presented in the second part of the evening. Former Chief Minister and Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy will inaugurate it. The chief guests will be the immediate past Chief Minister, MP Basavaraj Bommai, and the president of the organization Prof. Krishna Gowda. He said that online registration is available.

This time, the awardees are Dr. Govinda Rangarajan, Director of the Indian Institute of Science, Dr. Chandrashekhar Shetty, founder of Lions Hospital, ophthalmologist, Nagaraj, founder of BASE Institute, and Prayog Vijnana Kendra. He said that such awareness programs are needed for India to grow strong, become empowered, compete with the world, and provide equality to everyone. He said that quality and complete education is the solution to all problems.

Health is Wealth – Healthy Children are the Nation's Greatest Asset

Bengaluru: Polio is a dreadful disease that can cause permanent disability in children. It primarily affects children below the age of five. In India, no polio cases have been reported since 2011, and in 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared India a Polio-Free Nation. However, as polio cases are still being reported in neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is essential to continue the Pulse Polio Programme to safeguard children in our country. Official Inauguration of the Pulse Polio Programme by the Commissioner, Pommala Sunil Kumar

Under the Public Health Department of the Bengaluru North City Corporation, the National Pulse Polio Programme is being conducted from 21-12-2025 to 24-12-2025 across the city corporation limits, covering 31 Urban Primary Health Centres, 1 Community Health Centre, 44 Namma Clinics, and maternity hospitals. Sunday morning, the Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Pommala Sunil Kumar, officially inaugurated the programme at the Amruthahalli Primary Health Centre by lighting the ceremonial lamp and administering polio drops to children.

Action Plan
1. Total population – 2,455,245
2. Total households – 589,507

3. Children aged 0-5 years – 270,297
4. Number of slum areas – 1,127
5. Children aged 0-5 years in slum areas – 123,536
6. Migrant population areas – 779
7. Migrant population – 34,490
8. Migrant children aged 0-5 years – 2,785
9. Number of booths – 932
10. Fixed booths – 726
11. Transit teams – 101
12. Mobile teams – 105
13. Total vaccination personnel – 3,728
14. Total supervisors – 186

Within the Bengaluru North City Corporation limits, Pulse Polio vaccination is being carried out in all wards through fixed booths set up at Urban Primary Health Centres, Namma Clinics, dispensaries, Anganwadi centres, and schools. In addition, mobile and transit teams have been deployed at bus stands, railway stations, government hospitals, malls, private nursing homes, medical colleges, major markets, slum areas, and other high-footfall locations. For effective monitoring and implementation of the programme, Health Officers, Deputy Health Officers, and Medical Officers of Health have been appointed as nodal officers by the Bengaluru North City Corporation.

ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PVT. LTD.

Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infina, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005, MAHARASHTRA (INDIA).

APPENDIX IV - POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

The undersigned being the authorized officer of Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL), Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Enforcement Rules"). Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) (collectively referred to as the "Borrowers") mention herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers and the public in general that the under signed has taken symbolic / physical possession of the property described herein below in supersize of powers conferred upon him under Sub-section(4) of Section 13 of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to revision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in receipt of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby caution not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ACHFL for an amount mention herein under with the interest thereon.

Name of Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) and Loan Account Number	Date of Demand Notice & Amount (in Rs.)	Date of Possession
1) SHASHIKUMAR N (Applicant) 2) NAGRAJ N (Co-Applicant)	09.07.2025 Rs. 3,41,553/- (Rupees Three Lakh Forty One Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Three Only)	19-12-2025 NPA: 29.06.2025
3) VENKATAMMA (Co-Applicant) LAN No: S131209000006		

Description of Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of property bearing V.P. Katha No. 139, E-Katha No. 15190200100420043, Situated at Nathabale Village, Budikote Hobli, Bangalore Taluk, Kolar District. Presently comes under Alambadi, Jyothenahalli Village Panchayat, Measuring East to West 10.668000000000001 Meters or 35 feet and North to South 9.7536 Meters or 32 Feet in all measuring 104.05 Square Meters along with Building constructed thereon and bounded on: East- House belongs to Satish; West- Property belongs to Srinivas; North- Road; South- Property belongs to Rajappa.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS / CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS: Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction / tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6,8 & 9 of Security (Interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002.

Date: 23.12.2025
Authorised Officer
Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

BAJAJ FINANCE LIMITED

Registered Office: C/o Bajaj Auto Limited Complex, Mumbai - Pune Road, Akurdi, 400049, India | Branch Office: Bajaj Finance, Prestige Towers, 5th Floor, Residency Road, Bangalore - 560025, Authorized Officer's Details: Mr. Manjunath Bhat, Bajaj Finance, Bangalore - 560025, Mob No: 9353669733

APPENDIX II-A 15th Possession Notice Under SARFAESI ACT 2002

Sale of Immovable Assets Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("ACT")

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and to the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) in respect of below mentioned secured asset which is mortgaged with Bajaj Finance Limited ("BFL"), and possession of which had been taken by undersigned Authorised Officer of BFL under the provisions of the ACT will be sold by Auction for recovery of the amount mentioned hereunder and further applicable interest, charges, and costs etc.

The secured asset described below is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS AND WHATEVER THERE IS" under Rule No. 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules ("the Rules") for recovery of the dues detailed as under: Particulars of E-auction

Name & Address of Borrower & Co-Borrower's	Date of Demand Notice & Amount (in Rs.)	Date of Possession
1) LOKESH K (Applicant)	11.03.2025 Rs. 9,70,016/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Seventy Thousand Sixteen Only)	18-12-2025

Description of Secured Asset: All that Piece And Parcel Of The Property Sy.No.239/2, Situated At Mayasanda Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, Comes Under The Limits Of Mayasanda Village Panchayat, Measuring 0.02 Guntas Of Land Along With Building Constructed And Bounded On The South By: - Hallehalli Road: West- House belongs to Yallamma; North- Janatha Colony; South- Road.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS / CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS: Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction / tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6,8 & 9 of Security (Interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002.

Date: 23.12.2025
Place: Bangalore
Authorised Officer
Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

PRIME MARKETING (BORROWER) - ADD - NO 3/2 GROUND & 1ST FLOOR, 9TH CROSS H.D.SIDDHAIA ROAD, BANGALORE - 560027

ABDUL ALEEM (CO-BORROWER), AKHILA BANU (CO-BORROWER), APT NO 4 2ND CROSS M LAYOUT KAVAL BYRASANDRA KARNATAKA, KARNATAKA - 560032

Loan Account Number H4048LP032752 & H404ECM0409161

Statutory Demand Notice U/s 13(2) Date & Amount Notice dated 10-Sep-25 Demand amount ₹.1,02,12,089/-

Outstanding Amount as on 15.12.2025 ₹.1,20,08,022/- (Rupees One Crore Twenty Lakh Eight Thousand and Twenty Two Only), as on 15/12/25

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF DUPLEX HOUSE BEARING FLAT NO.SF-2 PRESENT NO. 4/5 ON SECOND FLOOR OF THE APARTMENT CALLED PRIME ROSE APARTMENT HAVING A BUILT UP AREA OF 2270 SQ.FT. ON THE GROUND FLOOR AND A BUILT UP AREA OF 1100 SQ.FT. ON THE STUP

Editorial

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

Draft rolls defy migration trends

The draft electoral rolls for Tamil Nadu, published late last week by the Election Commission of India (ECI) after the special intensive revision (SIR), belie well-known demographic trends. No less than 97.4 lakh voters' names have been deleted, reducing the State's voting population from 6.41 crore to 5.4 crore — a decrease of 15.2% across 38 districts. Even after conceding that these are only draft rolls and will be revised with the addition of new voters and successful challenges to deletions, the numbers run counter to nationwide trends in migration and births and deaths.

Deletions due to the SIR are particularly pronounced in the urban areas of the State. In Chennai, a major destination for in-migration, the pre-SIR voter list of 40 lakh has been scrubbed down by 14.25 lakh, a drop of 35.6%. In some Assembly constituencies in the State capital, the drop is even steeper: in Anna Nagar (down 42.2%), Villivakkam (40.7%), Thousand Lights (40.7%) and T Nagar (40.8%), the draft voter list is leaner by at least 40%. The State's 58 Assembly constituencies, home to 28.6% of pre-SIR voters, account for 45% of the deletions. These facts beg the question: where, if not to the cities, are voters moving?

Explaining the deletions, the ECI says 66.44 lakh removals were on account of either migration or untraceable addresses, 26.94 lakh due to death, and 3.39 lakh due to name duplication. The very high share attributed to migration is a red flag because, as per Census trends, in-migration into Tamil Nadu from other States exceeds out-migration. The much higher deletions in DMK strongholds compared to Opposition areas are another factor that triggers alarm.

Even compared to the previous exercise done more than two decades ago, this overhaul of the electoral rolls is remarkable. Then, 55 lakh voters were scrubbed statewide — roughly 9-10% of the then electorate — compared to 97 lakh removed now. In sheer numbers, voter deletions in Tamil Nadu dwarf those in Bihar (65 lakh) and Gujarat (73.73 lakh), and in terms of proportion (15.4%), they top every other State or Union Territory that has published post-SIR draft rolls so far. The Bihar precedent must worry every voter in the country. In that State, the net — and perhaps selective — reduction of 6% of the voter list produced a stunning electoral outcome that defied all projections, returning an incumbent government of turncoats and giving a 90% strike rate to the BJP in particular. It is no one's case that voter lists should not be refreshed. The Opposition's contention is that the SIR has been poorly timed, badly planned and hastily executed — with partisan intent to boot. It has the potential to cause mass disenfranchisement of rightful voters and therefore poses a grave peril to India's electoral democracy. Especially in crucial States like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the manner in which the SIR is being conducted is fraught with risk. When the people's true mandate is sought to be thwarted through sleights of hand, bad outcomes follow — and can last generations — as seen after the disputed elections of 1987 in Jammu and Kashmir.



P.V. PRABHAKAR RAO,
CHAIRMAN, PV GLOBAL FOUNDATION

As India marks the 21st Death Anniversary of P.V. Narasimha Rao and reflects on over three decades of economic reforms, it is an appropriate moment to assess the significance of the choices made during 1991-96 and the continuity they have found in subsequent governments. P.V. Narasimha Rao's contribution to India lies not merely in initiating reforms, but in redefining the relationship between the State, the market and society. His leadership at a moment of profound economic distress altered India's economic trajectory in ways that continue to shape the country's present and future.

Leadership at a Moment of Crisis

When Rao assumed office in June 1991, India faced a severe balance of payments crisis, with foreign exchange reserves barely sufficient to cover a few weeks of imports. The crisis compelled difficult decisions, but it was Rao's political sagacity and administrative resolve that transformed adversity into opportunity.

The idea of economic reform had circulated within policy circles for decades. What was lacking was political ownership at the highest level. Rao provided that leadership. Within weeks of taking office, his government initiated structural reforms that dismantled the Licence-Permit-Quota system, liberalised trade, rationalised tariffs, devalued the rupee to restore competitiveness, and

opened several sectors to foreign investment.

These decisions marked a decisive break from a heavily controlled economic framework that had delivered limited growth for decades.

A STRUCTURAL BREAK IN INDIA'S GROWTH PATH

The reforms of 1991-96 triggered a structural shift. India moved from the so-called "Hindu rate of growth" of around 2-3% to sustained higher growth over the following decades. In the post-reform period, India's average growth rate rose to around 6-7%, lifting millions out of poverty and integrating the economy with global markets.

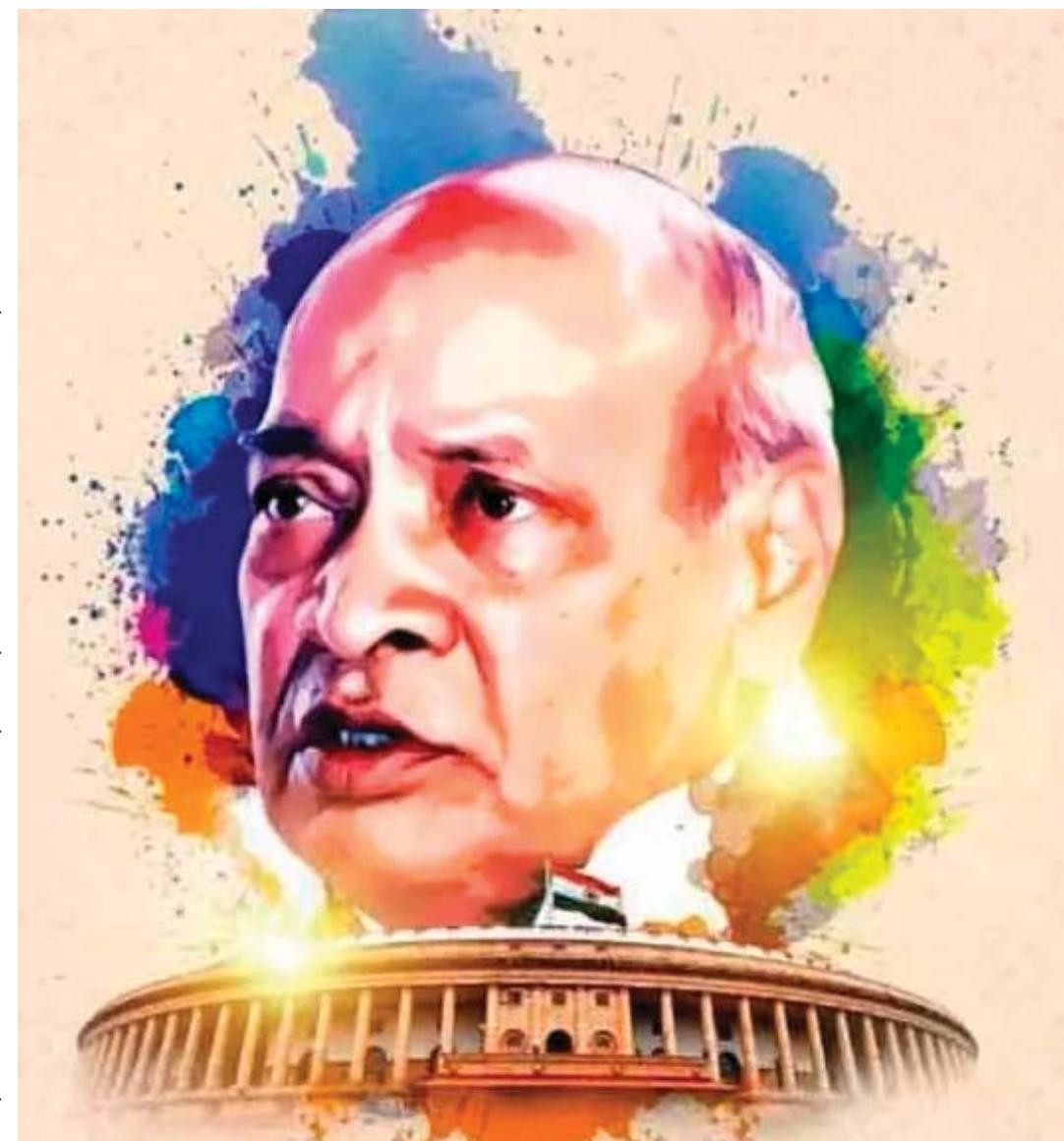
India's GDP, which stood at roughly \$275 billion in 1991, has expanded to over \$4.2 trillion today, making it one of the world's largest economies. Equally significant has been the diversification of growth — particularly in services, technology, manufacturing and exports — sectors that were previously constrained by regulation.

Poverty reduction has been one of the most consequential outcomes. While estimates vary by methodology, there is broad consensus that the proportion of Indians living in poverty has declined sharply since the early 1990s, reflecting the long-term impact of growth enabled by reform.

Reforms with a Human Face

Contrary to simplistic characterisations, Rao did not view reforms as an abandonment of social responsibility. His approach emphasised a middle path — economic efficiency combined with social protection.

During his tenure, rural development received sustained attention. Institutional decentralisation through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments strengthened Panchayati Raj institutions, linking local governance to national development priorities. Employment generation, infrastructure expansion and welfare delivery remained integral to the reform framework. Rao's insight was that growth and social justice are not competing objectives. Wealth creation enables redistribution;



without growth, welfare becomes fiscally unsustainable.

CONTINUITY AND DEEPENING OF REFORMS

India's reform journey did not end in 1996. Subsequent governments expanded and adapted the framework Rao established. In recent years, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this reform trajectory has been consolidated and deepened. Since 2014, India's economy has grown substantially in scale, crossing \$4.2 trillion and emerging as one of the fastest-growing major economies. Structural reforms such as the Goods and Services Tax, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, large-scale infrastructure investment, financial inclusion through Jan Dhan accounts, and digital public infrastruc-

ture have strengthened economic resilience and formalisation.

India has also witnessed significant improvements in poverty reduction, welfare coverage and service delivery, aided by technology-driven governance and fiscal consolidation. The emphasis on manufacturing, logistics, renewable energy and skilling reflects an effort to prepare the economy for the next phase of growth. While challenges remain — particularly in employment generation, human development indicators and inequality — the direction of reform has remained broadly consistent with the foundations laid in 1991-96.

The Road Ahead As India aspires to become a developed economy by the middle of this century, the

lessons of Rao's leadership remain relevant. Reform is not an event but a continuous process, requiring political courage, institutional capacity and social consensus.

P.V. Narasimha Rao demonstrated that decisive leadership, guided by pragmatism can transform a nation's prospects. The economic confidence India displays today owes much to the reforms he initiated and to the continuity of that vision in subsequent decades.

Remembering Rao is therefore not merely an act of commemoration. It is a reaffirmation of India's commitment to openness, pragmatism and reform — principles that continue to guide the country's economic journey.

(P.V. PRABHAKAR RAO IS THE 3RD SON OF LATE SRI. P.V. NARASIMHA RAO)

Melting danger: A dead glacier is a loss; a dying one a threat



gone. The school, destroyed. Two dozen homes and trekking lodges, plus fields of potatoes — wiped out.

Months later, a scientist named Scott Watson was walking the flood's path in reverse, up the steep valleys, up past mud-encrusted books in the ruined school, up to the unknown lake that had suddenly made itself very known. All across the fast-warming Himalayas, melting glaciers are creating thousands of high-altitude lakes — and thousands of new opportunities for avalanches and earthquakes to cause destruction. When falling rocks or snow land on a frozen glacier, nothing much happens. But as the ice melts and forms a lake, those falling

objects can set off a flood that menaces villages, tourist lodges, hydropower plants and anything else in its path.

Watson, a glaciologist at the University of Leeds, and his team trekked through Thame as part of an expedition in the Everest region to measure glacial lakes using sonar and drones. Sitting on these lakes in an inflatable kayak, the scientists found them anything but placid. Ice cliffs leaked noisy streams of fresh meltwater. Rocks and debris tumbled in. Behind heavy clouds, unseen landslides rumbled all around, like rolling thunder. The death of a glacier is a loss reversible only on geological time scales. But before a glacier is gone —

while it is still dying — it represents a threat. As a glacier shrinks, it sheds water that gathers in the earthen bowl where the ice once sat, forming a lake. The dirt and rock around this bowl are loose, crumbly. Maybe one day there is a landslide. Maybe a chunk of the glacier's remaining ice breaks off and plummets into the water. Picture doing a cannonball into an above-ground swimming pool, said Daniel Shugar, an expert on glacial floods at the University of Calgary — except you blow out an entire wall of the pool. "It would drain within seconds," he said. Water plunges down the valley, picking up sand, silt, gravel and boulders. It becomes a slurry so thick that it knocks down buildings.

But it isn't just their capacity for devastation that makes these floods terrifying. It's how hard it is to predict where, when and how they will happen. The lakes that flooded Thame last year were small, not on anybody's list of those most likely to cause a disaster. When you think of a glacier, you probably imagine an expanse of white. Watson and his team crossed the face of Nepal's longest glacier and found a river of dirt, boulders and milky-gray water. Ice is still there, beneath the debris. But as it melts, puddles become ponds, ponds become lakes, and lakes join up, transforming the landscape into ribbonlike waterways. One way to reduce flood hazards is by making lakes smaller. Nepal has begun lowering water levels at some high-risk lakes, though melting glaciers continue to feed them.

DIGITAL SPEED, HUMAN DELAY

WHY ARTISTS AND SCHOLARS DESERVE TIMELY HONORARIUMS

GOLDEN DAYS VS. DIGITAL DAZE

POKKULURU SUBBA RAO,

Elers often reminisce about the "golden days," when life was slower but more humane. Today, dazzled by the immediacy of digital technology, many of us dismiss their nostalgia. After all, Aadhaar cards, PAN cards, e-certificates, and online applications arrive at lightning speed. Digitalization has indeed revolutionized access and efficiency. But beneath this sheen lies a troubling paradox: while documents and services are delivered instantly, the human touch in financial dealings — especially honorariums for artists and scholars — has eroded. The Old Practice: Instant Gratification, Human Respect. In earlier times, institutions like All India Radio (AIR) and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) upheld a dignified practice. Orators, artists, and scholars were handed cheques immediately after their programmes. This gesture was not just financial — it was symbolic of respect, recognition, and empathy. For many from middle and lower-middle classes, this immediate payment ensured stability and dignity. The satisfaction of walking away with a tangible honorarium was a morale booster, affirming the value of their contribution. The Digital Shift: Speed Without Soul. Post-digitalization, the system has changed drastically: Honorariums are now deposited directly into bank accounts. Payments are often delayed for weeks or months. Artists and scholars are left in uncertainty, facing financial hardships. Ironically, the very technology that promises speed has introduced bureaucratic bottlenecks and emotional disconnect. The human touch — the handshake, the immediate recognition — has vanished. Personal Testimony: A Stark Reality. As someone who has delivered programmes both in the pre-digital and post-digital eras, I have lived this contrast. Earlier, the cheque in hand was a source of joy and relief. Today, digital transfers arrive late, leaving contributors anxious and financially strained. This indifference disproportionately affects those who rely on honorariums for sustenance — teachers, researchers, cultural performers, and spiritual speakers. What was once a system of empathy has become one of neglect. The Larger Problem: A Common Cry. This is not just my personal grievance — it is a collective problem. Across India, countless artists, scholars, and cultural workers face similar delays. Many depend on these honorariums for daily expenses. Delays erode trust in institutions that are otherwise revered. The absence of accountability undermines the dignity of contributors. Digitalization should not mean dehumanization. A Call for Reform: Restoring Empathy in Digital Systems.

Sensex rallies 638 pts, Nifty settles above 26,000 on foreign fund inflows, firm global trends

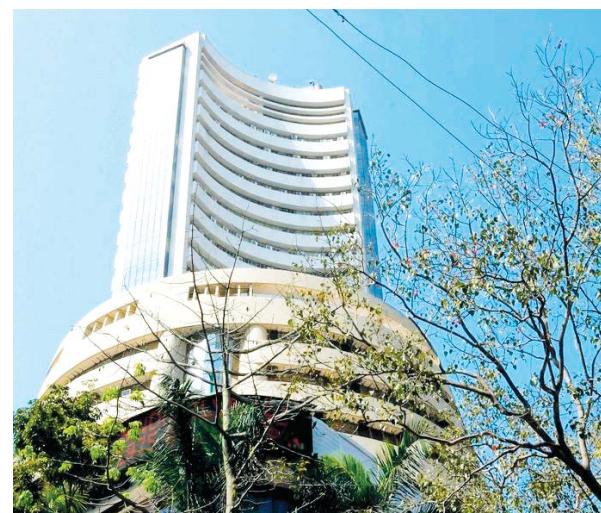
Mumbai (TSIT) Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent on Monday as investor sentiment remained positive amid foreign fund inflows and a rally in global markets on expectations of further monetary policy easing by the US Federal Reserve. Building on the previous session's rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 638.12 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 85,567.48. During the day, it surged 671.97 points or 0.79 per cent to 85,601.33.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 206 points or 0.79 per cent to close above the 26,000 mark at 26,172.40.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Tech Mahindra, Bharat Electronics and Maruti were among the biggest gainers.

However, State Bank of India, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Larsen & Toubro and Titan were the laggards. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi jumped over 2 per cent, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index climbed nearly 2 per cent. Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index also settled in positive territory. European markets were trading on a mixed note. US markets ended higher on Friday.

"Indian markets extend-



ed their year-end rally, supported by strong liquidity and global cues, as expectations of further Fed easing in 2026 continue to underpin growth. FIIs turned net buyers, reinforcing the positive tone, with IT and metals leading gains," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,830.89 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) also bought equities worth Rs 5,722.89 crore in the previous trade.

"A stabilising USD-INR exchange rate, coupled with data showing foreign portfolio investors turning net buyers of domestic

equities over the past few sessions, triggered broad-based buying and short covering across derivative segments."

"Global risk appetite also remained firm, supported by expectations of further monetary policy easing by the US Federal Reserve, which helped sustain the risk-on momentum across global markets," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.86 per cent to USD 60.99 per barrel.

On Friday, the Sensex jumped 447.55 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 84,929.36. The Nifty climbed 150.85 points or 0.58 per cent to 25,966.40.

Gleneagles Chennai showcases robotic 5 kg fibroid removal at Tirupati CME



Gleneagles Hospital Chennai, part of the Fortis Network, set a new benchmark in gynaecology by showcasing a potential world-record robotic fibroid removal during a high-level Continuing Medical Education (CME) programme held in Tirupati on Sunday. Titled "Robotics in Gynaecology: The New Standard", the event took place at Hotel Renest and brought together over 40 leading gynaecologists to discuss advances in minimally invasive surgery.

The CME was organised in association with the Tirupati Obstetric and Gynaecological Society (TOGS) and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, SVMC, Tirupati. The scientific session was led by Dr Padmapriya Vivek, Director of Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Fertility Medicine, Robotic Surgery and Uterine Transplant at

Gleneagles Hospital Chennai.

A major highlight was the presentation of a landmark case involving the robotic removal of a 4.95 kg fibroid, a feat currently being recommended for the Guinness World Records. Dr Padmapriya explained how robotic technology enables precise removal of large fibroids through small incisions, resulting in minimal blood loss, faster recovery, and improved surgical safety.

The programme began with a welcome address by Dr Umadevi, Secretary of TOGS, and concluded with honours led by Dr G Parthasarathi Reddy, President of TOGS and HOD of OBG at SVMC. The event underscored Gleneagles Hospital Chennai's commitment to advancing women's healthcare through cutting-edge robotic technology and continuous medical education.

Premia Academy hosts Christmas carnival to support women empowerment

Mumbai, Dec 21 : UltraTech Cement Limited has received a tax demand order from the Joint Commissioner of Central Goods and Services Tax and Central Excise, Patna, asking the company to pay alleged dues of about Rs 390 crore. Along with this, the company has also been asked to pay a penalty of a similar amount and interest of around Rs 28 lakh.

In a regulatory filing, UltraTech Cement Ltd said the demand relates to alleged short payment of Goods and Services Tax, improper use of



input tax credit and other related issues.

"The Company has received an Order from the Joint Commissioner, Central Goods and Services Tax & Central Excise, Patna," it said in its filing. The case covers the period from the financial year 2018-19 to

2022-23. The total penalty and interest together account for nearly two-thirds of the company's profit of Rs 1,232 crore reported for the second quarter ended September 2025.

During the same quarter, the country's largest cement maker reported a strong

performance, with revenue rising 20.3 per cent year-on-year to Rs 19,607 crore.

"Order in Original passed upholding tax liability of Rs 3,90,95,58,194 plus applicable interest on tax demand; additional interest Rs 27,68,289 and penalty of Rs 3,90,95,58,194," the company added.

However, the company said it is considering all legal options and plans to challenge the order.

UltraTech added that it does not expect the tax demand to have any impact on its operations or financial position.

Business

BENGALURU
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2025

5

Sakthi Group forays into aviation biz, sets up Rs 750-cr trainer aircraft unit

CHENNAI: The 104-year-old diversified Coimbatore-based Sakthi Group has ventured into aviation sector through Sakthi Aircraft Industry Pvt Ltd (SAIPL), which, in collaboration with Austria's Diamond Aircraft Industries, is pioneering India's first private trainer aircraft manufacturing facility at Tirupur, entailing an investment of Rs 750 crore.

Through this partnership, SAIPL will manufacture and deliver Diamond DA40 NG in India and also offer Diamond's other aircraft models to domestic customers. It will be complemented by a range of services

including maintenance, support, training and spares for all Diamond aircraft. Sakthi Group chairman M Manickam, told DT Next on Sunday, that it has entered into a 25-year licensing agreement with Diamond Aircraft to manufacture the training aircraft. "We are expecting to start delivery of aircraft in the first quarter of 2026," he said, adding initially it will start operating on 80,000 sqft space in its foundry at Tirupur.

Noting that the step-by-step process involves transporting through containers to airfields to assembly operations, Manickam said



said "we are also looking at three to four airfields for this purpose. Tamil Nadu will be a major location while airfields in north will be used to support our maintenance and service operations." The

investment will be met through internal accruals and debt, he said, adding the deal with Diamond dates back to about two years ago, when the Sakthi Group saw an opportunity in manufacturing training aircraft for use in flying schools.

SAIPL has already started sourcing talent as it has put a 40-member team in place in this phase of operations. "Right now the first batch consists of people from all over India predominantly south but over time we will be ramping up that would mean a team of 300-400 people," Manickam said.

India is one of the fastest growing aircraft

market, with domestic airliners placing orders for delivery of 2,500 aircraft over five years. To service an aircraft, 20 pilots are required so that they can meet the three hours per day flying rules against the current practise of 15-18 hours duties.

"The demand for pilots is 50,000, which means training 8,000 to 10,000 every year and typically, the cost of training ranges from Rs 65 lakh to Rs 1 crore in India and Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 2 crore outside," he said adding there is a shortage of at least 7,000 pilots in India given that India produces only 700-800 pilots every year.

Online fraud awareness programme held at GITAM



GITAM Deemed-to-be University, Hyderabad, organised an awareness programme on online frauds titled "Fraud ka Full Stop" on December 22, 2025, in collaboration with the Telangana State Cyber Security Bureau (TGSB). The programme was part of a six-week state-wide campaign to enhance public awareness and prevent cybercrime across Telangana.

Harshvardhan, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Sangareddy, attended the event as the guest of honour and explained various online frauds such as OTP scams, investment frauds, parcel scams, digital arrest

cybercrime and explained common fraud techniques used by cybercriminals. He cautioned that everyone is vulnerable to online fraud and warned about malicious software that can lead to blackmail, extortion, and misuse of personal data. He urged students to be careful while engaging in online gaming, betting, and chatting.

Paritosh Pankaj, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Sangareddy, attended the event as the guest of honour and explained various online frauds such as OTP scams, investment frauds, parcel scams, digital arrest

IDFC FIRST Bank launches global savings account for NRIs in GIFT City



Hyderabad (TSIT) IDFC FIRST Bank has introduced the IDFC FIRST Global Savings Account, a unique foreign-currency savings solution designed exclusively for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) through GIFT City, Gujarat.

earned on the account and fixed deposits is TDS-exempt, making it a tax-efficient option.

Key features include an attractive interest rate of up to 4.75% on USD balances, monthly interest credit with compounding benefits, and the option to book USD and Euro fixed deposits at competitive rates. Customers can manage both their NRI and GIFT City accounts through a single mobile banking app and benefit from an integrated relationship management experience.

Commenting on the launch, Ashish Singh, Head - Retail Liabilities, IDFC FIRST Bank, said the new offering is aimed at redefining international banking for NRIs by combining higher interest rates, zero-fee remittances, currency flexibility, and a secure digital platform.

Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd.
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infiria, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. MAHARASHTRA (INDIA).

APPENDIX IV - POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immoveable Property)

The undersigned being the authorized officer of Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL), Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 ("Enforcement Rules"), Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) (collectively referred to as the "Borrowers") mention herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to Borrowers and the public in general that the under signed has symbolic / physical possession of the property described herein below in supersize of powers conferred upon him under Sub-section(4) of Section 13 of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to revision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in receipt of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby caution not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ACHFL for an amount mention herein under with the interest thereon.

Name of Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s) **Date of Demand Notice & Amount (in Rs.)** **Date of Possession**

1) SURESH A M (Applicant) 22.08.2025
2) ANUSHA P (Co-Applicant) Rs. 12,64,242/- (Rupees Twelve Lakh Sixty Four Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Two Only)
LAN No: 118202010283 NPA: 29.07.2025

Description of Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of the property bearing No. 426, G.L. Asset No. 152200542079020156, situated at Channapatana Grama, Hura Grama Panchayat, the property coming under the limits of Nanjangud Taluk, Mysore District, measuring East to West: 9.14 meters and North to South: 12.192 meters and bounded on the East- Property of Dasabov; West- Property of Madabov; North- Property of Chinnamma; South- Road.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO BORROWERS / CO-BORROWERS AND GUARANTORS
Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time hereinafter by way of public auction / tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6, 8 & 9 of Security (Interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002.

Date: 23.12.2025 **Place:** Mysore **Authorised Officer:** Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

Blenders Pride Fashion Tour redefines craft in Kolkata finale

The Tour culminated in Kolkata with a bold new interpretation of craft, shaping Fashion's Next Move.



The Blenders Pride Fashion Tour concluded its 2025 edition in Kolkata with a bold and immersive showcase that reimagined the future of fashion craftsmanship. Set against the iconic Howrah Bridge, the grand finale transformed the Hooghly River into a dramatic runway, presenting an experimental collection by designer Anamika Khanna's AK | OK, with actor Ishaan Khatter as the showstopper.

In collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), the showcase challenged

conventional ideas of craft, portraying it as a dynamic and evolving force. Anamika Khanna deconstructed traditional techniques such as zardozi, chikankari, and mirror work, reconstructing them through futuristic silhouettes, metallic elements, and cosmic-inspired graphics.

The show unfolded on a barge anchored in the Hooghly River, turning it into a floating theatre of fashion. With divas emerging onto the stage, dramatic lighting, smoke effects, and responsive lasers, the presentation built momentum and visual intensity. The finale reached its peak with Ishaan Khatter's arrival in a speedboat, culminating in a powerful closing sequence against the illuminated Howrah Bridge.

Premia Academy hosts Christmas carnival to support women empowerment

Mumbai, Dec 21 : UltraTech Cement Limited has received a tax demand order from the Joint Commissioner of Central Goods and Services Tax and Central Excise, Patna, asking the company to pay alleged dues of about Rs 390 crore. Along with this, the company has also been asked to pay a penalty of a similar amount and interest of around Rs 28 lakh.

In a regulatory filing, UltraTech Cement Ltd said the demand relates to alleged short payment of Goods and Services Tax, improper use of



input tax credit and other related issues.

"The Company has received an Order from the Joint Commissioner, Central Goods and Services Tax & Central Excise, Patna," it said in its filing. The case covers the period from the financial year 2018-19 to

2022-23. The total penalty and interest together account for nearly two-thirds of the company's profit of Rs 1,232 crore reported for the second quarter ended September 2025.

During the same quarter, the country's largest cement maker reported a strong

performance, with revenue rising 20.3 per cent year-on-year to Rs 19,607 crore.

However, the company said it is considering all legal options and plans to challenge the order.

UltraTech added that it does not expect the tax demand to have any impact on its operations or financial position.

Can't be forced to return, faces political assassination: Sheikh Hasina



NEW DELHI: Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday dismissed calls for her return to the country amid ongoing legal proceedings, saying the action against her was politically driven and insisting she would not go back under the present circumstances, even as Bangladesh witnessed fresh unrest last week, including the killing of a Hindu man.

"You cannot demand my return to face my political assassination," Hasina said, reiterating that she has challenged Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to take the matter to The Hague, expressing confidence that an independent court would acquit her. She said she would return only when Bangladesh has a legitimate government and an independent judiciary.

Elaborating on her position in an email interview with ANI, Hasina said the verdict delivered by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) was not a judicial exercise but a political one, describing it as a "political assassination in judicial robes." She said she was denied the right to defend herself and to appoint lawyers of her choice, alleg-

ing that the tribunal had been used to conduct a "witch hunt of the Awami League."

Despite the allegations, Hasina said her trust in Bangladesh's constitutional framework remains intact. "Our constitutional tradition is strong, and when legitimate governance is restored and our judiciary regains its independence, justice will prevail," she said.

Her comments follow a ruling by a Bangladesh court in November that found Hasina guilty of "crimes against humanity" in connection with the July-August 2024 uprising, with local media reporting that International Crimes Tribunal-1 imposed the death penalty. According to the Dhaka Tribune, the tribunal convicted the former

Prime Minister on all five charges of crimes against humanity. The report said the judgement concluded that Hasina, along with former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, had orchestrated and enabled atrocities during the July-August movement.

The ICT verdict, she said, has also triggered demands for her extradition, which she dismissed as coming from "an increasingly desperate and adrift Yunus administration," while others recognise the proceedings as a politically driven "kangaroo tribunal."

She expressed gratitude for India's continued hospitality and the support extended by political parties across India. Explaining her exit from Bangladesh, Hasina said she left to prevent further bloodshed and not because she feared accountability. Placing developments within a regional context, Hasina addressed the worsening of India-Bangladesh relations, including Dhaka's decision to summon the Indian envoy. She blamed the interim administration for issuing hostile statements against India, failing to protect religious minorities and allowing extremists to influence foreign policy.

She also questioned the credibility of elections scheduled for February, citing the continued ban on the Awami League. "An election without the Awami League is not an election, but a coronation," she said, alleging that Yunus is governing "without a single vote from the Bangladeshi people" while attempting to bar a party that has won nine national mandates. Hasina warned that voter participation historically collapses when people are denied the

Israeli army targets Hezbollah sites in Lebanon



JERUSALEM: The Israeli military carried out airstrikes in southern Lebanon on Monday, saying it targeted Hezbollah sites.

"The IDF (Israel Defence Forces) struck several Hezbollah terrorists in the area of Sidon in southern Lebanon," a military spokesperson said in a statement.

On Friday, the two sides held talks again as part of a security dialogue, focusing on Hezbollah's disarmament and the return of residents to their

homes in Lebanon's southern border villages, according to Israeli and Lebanese sources.

The meeting, under US coordination, took place in

the town of Naqoura in southwest Lebanon, near Israel's northern border, Xinhua news agency reported. Israeli Deputy Director for Foreign

Policy at the National Security Council Yosef Dreznin represented Israel in the talks, while Lebanon's former ambassador to the United States, Simon Karam, led the Lebanese delegation.

According to an Israeli statement, the meeting centered on Hezbollah's disarmament and the advancement of economic projects, highlighting a mutual interest in countering Hezbollah and ensuring long-term security for communities on both sides of

the border. A statement by the Lebanese presidency said that during the talks, Karam highlighted Lebanon's firm position on the humanitarian and national importance of enabling displaced villagers to return safely to their homes. A ceasefire agreement between Hezbollah and Israel has been in force since November 27, 2024 but Israel has continued to carry out occasional strikes aiming at eliminating Hezbollah threats.

COLOMBO: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will arrive in Sri Lanka on Tuesday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's special envoy and meet with the island nation's leadership, the Indian High Commission here said on Monday. "The visit underscores India's Neighbourhood First Policy and takes place in the context of Operation Sagar Bandhu launched to address the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

It said that during his visit as PM Modi's Special Envoy, the minister will meet with the Sri Lankan leadership. India was the first country to respond to Sri Lanka's international appeal for help following the devastation caused by the cyclone.

India's Operation 'Sagar Bandhu' provided relief and recovery assistance of immense proportions.

Since the launch of Operation Sagar Bandhu on November 28, India has provided over 1,134 tonnes of humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka, including dry rations,

tents, tarpaulins, hygiene kits, clothing, water purification systems, and 14.5 tonnes of medicines and surgical equipment. Indian Naval ships INS Vikrant, INS Udaygiri, INS Sukanya, LCU-54, LCU-57, LCU-51, and INS Gharial delivered large volumes of relief material to Colombo and Trincomalee, apart from Indian Coast Guard Ship Sharya.

Two teams of the National Disaster Response Force conducted immediate search and rescue operations, while an 85-member Indian Army Field Hospital set up in

Mahiyanganaya provided life-saving medical care to more than 7,000 patients. Medical centres using BHISHM Arogya Maitri cubes were established in severely affected areas, and 248 tonnes of Bailey Bridge components with 48 engineers were airlifted to restore critical connectivity.

Indian Air Force and Navy helicopters evacuated survivors, transported troops, and delivered relief supplies reflecting India's steadfast commitment to Sri Lanka during a time of crisis.

Is crypto an opportunity or a threat?

The fascination with cryptocurrencies shows no sign of fading. With the passage of the Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins Act, known as the Genius Act, in July, US lawmakers added to the sense that crypto is here to stay. But look beyond the hype and an uncomfortable issue remains unresolved: Are cryptocurrencies a genuine innovation capable of serving the common good or a speculative threat to financial and social stability?

Of course, not all cryptocurrencies are alike. Unbacked ones, such as Bitcoin or Ethereum, have no underlying assets and derive their value purely from people's belief that they have any. But backed cryptocurrencies, including stablecoins, attempt to anchor their value through holdings of real-world assets, such as dollars or short-term government bonds.

Nonetheless, the same two questions apply to both categories: Are they viable? And, if so, do they benefit society? While humility requires that we not claim certainty about the answer to the first question, the second one must be met with a resounding no. Crypto innovation undoubtedly has some valuable features — including blockchain-based applications, smart contracts and decentralized finance — but the proliferation of private digital assets has also widened the gap between private and social interests.

To be sure, the welfare implications of cryptocurrencies are more complex for dysfunctional countries

where the state expropriates individuals or companies through financial repression or other means or uses transaction data to oppress political opponents or minorities. In these cases, crypto can technically replace dollar banknotes and offer lower transaction and concealment costs. But this specific use case does not vindicate cryptocurrencies, because other digital assets could do the same job. Bitcoin is the archetype of an unbacked cryptocurrency with no intrinsic value. Its valuation represents what economists call a pure bubble: it will collapse if confidence evaporates. But not all bubbles burst immediately. Gold has been trading for millennia at prices far above its "fundamental" value (which could be measured by the price that its industrial use would command if it stopped being held for speculative purposes).

Yet history offers many examples of bubbles that ended in ruin — from the Dutch tulip mania of the 1630s to the South Sea Bubble of 1720 and the recurring stock market and real estate crashes that have been with us ever since.

Could Bitcoin become the new gold? Possibly. But its value could also fall to zero. At most, we can be confident that very few of the hundreds of thousands of cryptocurrencies that have emerged will survive. It would be folly for regulated banks or insurance companies (whose losses are often borne by taxpayers) to speculate heavily in such assets without strict capital requirements.

The social damage stem-

ming from unbacked crypto is clearer. Unlike productive risk-taking, speculation in digital tokens creates little public benefit and causes a variety of harms. One cost is a diversion of seigniorage. In traditional systems, the gains from issuing money flow to the community via the state;

stablecoins are fully backed by cash, bank deposits, Treasury bills or money-market funds and that these reserves are regularly audited. Yet recent episodes cast doubt on such assurances. Tether, the largest stablecoin, was fined for misrepresenting its reserves and has never undergone a full inde-

pendent audit. Circle, whose USDC is the second-largest stablecoin, had 8 percent of its reserves tied up in Silicon Valley Bank when that institution failed in 2023. The crisis was resolved only because uninsured depositors like Circle were bailed out with public funds.

Stablecoins were conceived as a response to the volatility of unbacked crypto. By pegging their value to the dollar or other safe assets, they promise the best of both worlds: the efficiency of digital tokens and the stability of traditional money. At first glance, this seems like progress. But financial history is full of supposedly safe innovations — money-market funds, structured securities, mortgage derivatives — that sowed the seeds of later crises. Stablecoins may do the

same. Proponents retort that stablecoins are fully backed by cash, bank deposits, Treasury bills or money-market funds and that these reserves are regularly audited. Yet recent episodes cast doubt on such assurances.

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Mix of personal financial interest, ideology and the need to reinforce global demand for dollars to finance America's trade deficit. President Donald Trump has appointed regulators sympathetic to the industry to key oversight roles and the traditionally pro-industry Commodity Futures Trading Commission, rather than the Securities and Exchange Commission, is likely to take the lead on regulation. All this ensures a light-touch approach that should worry other countries. If they attempt to regulate dollar-denominated stablecoins strictly, the US may accuse them of protectionism, as it has already done in response to the EU's regulation of Big Tech under its digital market rules. Even when reserves are

trusted, well-capitalized and reputable intermediaries to monitor projects does not make markets freer; it makes them more fragile. Technological progress should improve financial efficiency, not roll back centuries' worth of hard-won insights.

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Russian general killed by bomb under his car in Moscow



MOSCOW: A Russian general was killed Monday morning after an explosive device detonated underneath his car in Moscow, and investigators said Ukraine could be behind the attack, the third such killing of a senior military officer in a year. Lt. Gen. Fanil Sarvarov, head of the Operational Training Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff, died from his injuries, said Svetlana Petrenko, the spokesperson for Russia's Investigative Committee, the nation's top criminal investigation agency. "Investigators are pursuing numerous lines of enquiry regarding the murder. One of these is that the crime was orchestrated by Ukrainian intelligence services," Petrenko said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that President Vladimir Putin had been immediately informed about Sarvarov's killing. The Defense Ministry said that Sarvarov had previously fought in Chechnya and taken part in Moscow's military campaign in Syria. Just over a year ago, on Dec 17, 2024, Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, the chief of the military's nuclear, biological and chemical protection forces, was killed by a bomb hidden on an electric scooter outside his apartment building. Kirillov's assistant also died.

Jaishankar to arrive in Sri Lanka on Tuesday as PM Modi's special envoy



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It said that during his visit as PM Modi's Special Envoy, the minister will meet with the Sri Lankan leadership. India was the first country to respond to Sri Lanka's international appeal for help following the devastation caused by the cyclone.

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NZ beat WI by 323 runs in third Test to seal series 2-0

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: Jacob Duffy claimed a fifer in the second innings as New Zealand registered a massive 323-run victory in the final Test against the West Indies and sealed the three-match series 2-0. The first Test at Hagley Oval was drawn, while New Zealand won the second by nine wickets.

Duffy's five-wicket haul in the second innings gave him his career-best match figures of 9 for 128, while Ajaz Patel recorded his best innings and match figures at home (3-23 and 6-136, respectively) as the West Indies were dismissed for 138 in their chase of 462 runs. The visitors began the final day on 43 without loss; the Windies openers, Brandon King and

John Campbell, got through the first hour intact, having reached 74 for no loss by the drinks break.

Afterwards, the West Indies lost five wickets for 11 runs and 10 overs. The breakthrough came shortly after drinks, when Duffy got the better of King (67), who was undone by a short ball that climbed awkwardly and took the glove.

Soon after, left-arm spinner Patel struck, ending Campbell's 105-ball stay. That wicket triggered a rapid slide: Kavem Hodge prodded defensively and lobbed a chance off Ajaz to short leg, where Rachin Ravindra reacted sharply to complete a stunning catch on the rebound.



Duffy's five-wicket haul in the second innings gave him his career-best match figures of 9 for 128, while Ajaz Patel recorded his best innings and match figures at home

deliveries before a probing back-of-a-length ball seamed away, took the outside edge, and was safely pouched low at first slip by Daryl Mitchell.

From a solid 87 for no loss, West Indies were quickly reduced to 99 for 5 at Lunch, with Shai Hope and Roston Chase steadying the ship. The duo's partnership, which lasted 56 balls, yielded only 6 runs before Chase became Duffy's fourth victim.

Hope stone-walled the New Zealand attack in his 78-ball stay, scoring three runs, before Ajaz trapped him in front. Glenn Phillips struck next to dismiss Kemar Roach, while Tevin Imlach dug in to offer some resistance, with

Anderson Phillip providing support as West Indies reached 138/8 at Tea.

After the break, Ravindra trapped Phillip lbw, and with the second new ball taken, Duffy removed Jayden Seales for a duck as New Zealand wrapped up the match in the final session.

Brief scores: New Zealand 578/8d (Devon Conway 227, Tom Latham 137; Justin Greaves 2-83) & 306/2d (Tom Latham 101, Devon Conway 100; Kavem Hodge 2-80) beat West Indies 420 (Kavem Hodge 123*; Jacob Duffy 4-86, Ajaz Patel 3-113) & 138 (Brandon King 67; Jacob Duffy 5-42, Ajaz Patel 3-23) by 323 runs.

Ashes: Jhye Richardson likely to be added to Australia's camp ahead of Boxing Day Test



the third Ashes Test.

With skipper Pat Cummins expected to sit out the Melbourne Test, and potentially the rest of the series, this will open the vacancy in the pace attack, meaning Richardson is very close to being in consideration.

The fact that Richardson has been called into camp to bowl in front of the coaching staff shows he remains very much in Australia's plans, despite playing his last Test in December 2022. Moreover, with veteran spinner Nathan Lyon being ruled out of the series with a hamstring injury, Australia will need to figure out a replacement for the veteran of 141 Tests.

Todd Murphy is likely the frontrunner to replace Lyon in the squad, with Corey Rocciccioli, Matthew Kuhnemann, Mitch Swepson and Cooper Connolly also in the fray. Murphy is likely the front-runner to replace Lyon in the squad. He was selected for his Test debut at 22 during Australia's Border-Gavaskar Trophy tour of India in 2023. He took a stunning 7-124 on debut and dismissed Virat Kohli four times throughout the series. Murphy was called in as Lyon's injury replacement during the 2023 Ashes and returned to the Test team against Sri Lanka in January this year, taking one wicket in Australia's innings victory.

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Man United captain Bruno Fernandes set to miss games after injury against Villa

BIRMINGHAM (ENGLAND): Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes could be out for "a while" after pulling up with an injury against Aston Villa on Sunday.

United coach Ruben Amorim said Fernandes had sustained a soft tissue injury in the first half of the Premier League game at Villa Park. Villa won 2-1. "I think it's soft tissues, so it's going to take a while. We'll see," Amorim told

Sky Sports. Fernandes appeared to hurt his hamstring when pulling up. He played on until the break but was replaced by Lisandro Martinez for the start of the second half.

Fernandes was then seen walking uncomfortably along the sideline as he made his way to the bench for the second half. "I think he is going to lose some games, but I don't know for sure," Amorim said in his post-match news conference.

"I don't want to talk about the matter, it is a guy who is always fit and he has shown he can always recover."

United is already without Bryan Mbeumo, Amad Diallo and Noussair Mazraoui, who are playing in the Africa Cup of Nations.

Amorim's options were further depleted on Sunday, with midfielder Kobbie Mainoo ruled out with a calf injury picked up in training.

"During this year,

especially in this time, we have so many problems, but we have to cope with that," Amorim said. Mainoo would have been the obvious replacement for Fernandes.

Even before Fernandes' injury, Amorim said Mainoo's absence was bad timing. "He is going to be fine in a few weeks, I think, I don't know," Amorim said. "Let's focus on the players that we have and are ready to play."

INDIAN ATHLETICS IN 2025

Neeraj hits 90m high but no end to country's doping woes

Young Sachin Yadav outperformed Chopra to emerge as a potential world-class javelin thrower with a fourth-place finish.

NEW DELHI: Despite a rare blip in form, Neeraj Chopra was the biggest saving grace for India's doping-marred athletics landscape after getting the 90m "monkey off his back" even as the sport's administrators worked towards making the country a hub of big-ticket events in a bitter-sweet 2025.

MARRIAGE AND 90M HIGH FOR CHOPRA

One of the most eligible bachelors in the country, Chopra tied the knot with tennis player Himani Mor in an intimate ceremony in a private resort in Himachal Pradesh with just a few close relatives and family members present. The outside world got to know of the event only after Chopra himself posted the marriage photos in his social media handles. A few months later, Chopra sent his spear to 90.23m to become the third Asian and 25th overall to achieve the feat.

Chopra clinched three more major titles -- the Paris Diamond League, the Golden Spike meet and the inaugural NC Classic. He realised his dream of hosting a world-class event in front of the home crowd and family members. He, however, came up short in the Diamond League Finals, finishing second to German Julian Weber. He was bidding



to regain the trophy he had won in 2022, but was barely able to touch the 85m mark.

But the most unexpected happened during the World Championships in Tokyo in September at the very venue where he achieved fame and Olympic gold in 2021.

Struggling with back pain,

defending champion Chopra was ousted after the fifth and penultimate round with a best effort of 84.03m that left him eighth overall.

He was outperformed by debutant compatriot Yadav (86.27m) who logged a creditable fourth-place finish. Chopra, who had also won a

silver in the 2022 edition, has not finished outside the top-2 since winning gold in 2021 Tokyo Games. After that, he has either won or finished second in 24 international events.

NEVER-ENDING DOPING MENACE

India continued to occupy the second spot in the global list of athletes ineligible to compete due to doping offences, with 128 athletes in the list released by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU). Some of the country's top athletes caught for doping included Shivpal, Pune Half Marathon winner Pradhan, Vilas Kirulakar, sprinter Sekar Dhanalakshmi and 2014 Asian Games medalist hammer thrower Manju Bala. Two minors were also handed three-year bans by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).

Former Indian junior team head coach Ramesh Nagpuri was suspended for "complicity" in doping. Two more coaches -- Karamveer Singh and Rakesh -- were also suspended for "complicity" and "administration of prohibited substances" respectively.

Asian Games silver medal-winning long distance runner Kartik Kumar accepted a three-year ban from the US Anti-Doping Agency after test

ing positive for a range of banned anabolic agents during out-of-competition tests there. Towards the end of the year, 18-year-old Sanjana Singh, who had won gold medals in women's 1500m and 5000m in the SAAF Senior Athletics Championships in Ranchi, and her coach Sandeep Singh were provisionally suspended for a doping offence. Later, former Asian Games gold-winning discus thrower Seema Punia got a 16-month ban for failing a dope test, adding to her checkered doping record, which included two previous violations, one of them at the junior level when she was merely 17.

Alarmed by the rising doping cases, the AFI set up an anti-doping cell to track down coaches and training centres suspected to be involved in substance abuse. It also made it mandatory for all coaches -- qualified and unqualified -- to register on its portal from this season onwards if they wanted to continue training athletes. It will also not recommend anyone who trains with unregistered coaches for national honours like the Arjuna and Kishore Ratna award.

However, except for relay runners, no other athlete currently trains at national camps under the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). Most of them train individually or at the National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) managed by the Sports Authority of India (SAI). Some of them also train at private facilities administered by entities such as Reliance Foundation and JSW Sports.

INDIA AS HOSTS OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

India successfully hosted a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze level meet on August 10 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. The event will be upgraded to silver level next year, to be held at the same venue on August 22, 2026. India also made bids for 2028 Asian Indoor Athletics Championships -- with Bhubaneswar as venue -- and the 2026 Asian Relays. The AFI decided to introduce the National Indoor Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar in March next year, to prepare for the 2028 Asian Indoor Championships for which it has made a bid. Meanwhile, Adille Sumariwalla's reign as AFI chief came to an end with 2002 Asian Games gold-winning shot putter Bahadur Sagoo replacing him.



Shambhala pre-release event highlights Aadi Saikumar's journey and strong industry support

The pre-release event of Shambhala, starring versatile actor Aadi Saikumar, was held in a grand manner on Sunday, creating strong buzz ahead of the film's theatrical release on December 25. The film is produced by Rajashkar Annabhimmoju and Maheedhar Reddy under the Shining Pictures banner and directed by Yagandhar Muni. Archana Iyer, Swasika, Ravi Varma, Madhunandan, and Shiva Karthik play key roles. Several prominent personalities from the film industry, including Kiran Abbavaram, Manchu Manoj, Priyadarshi, Anil Ravipudi, S Thaman, TG

Vishwa Prasad, Naveen Yerneni, and Mythri Shashi, attended the event and extended their best wishes to the team. Speaking at the event, Kiran Abbavaram praised the positive buzz surrounding Shambhala and recalled the support he received from Sai Kumar early in his career. Manchu Manoj lauded the film's trailer and expressed confidence in its success. Director Anil Ravipudi highlighted Aadi's willingness to experiment across genres and called him a brilliant actor deserving of a major hit. Aadi Saikumar expressed gratitude for the overwhelming support, noting that the teaser and trailers launched by Dulquer Salmaan,

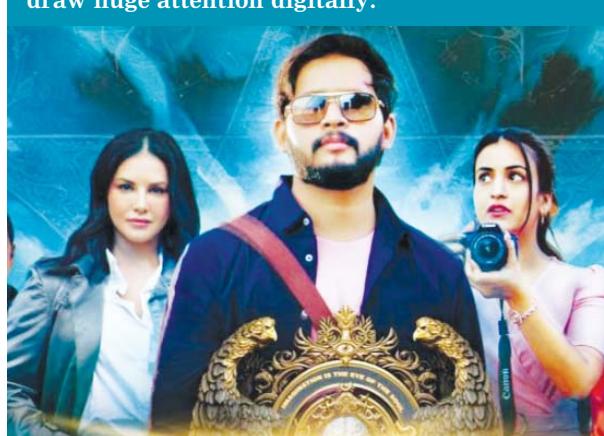
Prabhas, and Nani significantly raised expectations. He credited director Yagandhar Muni's dedication and the producers' commitment to quality for the film's strong impact. Veteran actor Sai Kumar shared his pride as a father, calling Shambhala a special milestone in Aadi's career. He expressed confidence that the film's content and positive word-of-mouth would resonate with audiences. With strong backing from industry figures and positive early responses, Shambhala is gearing up for a festive Christmas release, aiming to strike a chord with audiences through its blend of science, spirituality, and emotion.

New poster of RK Deeksha unveiled



Sunny Leone's Gippa Gippa song from Trimukha creates buzz

The much-awaited song Gippa Gippa from the film Trimukha, starring Sunny Leone along with Yogesh, Sahithi Dasari, and Akriti Agarwal, has been officially released and is generating massive buzz across platforms. Launched as a perfect New Year treat, the song has quickly gone viral, with audiences playing it on repeat and showering it with overwhelming appreciation. Packed with high energy and grand visuals, Gippa Gippa has struck an instant chord with viewers and is trending widely on social media. The vibrant presentation and catchy beats have contributed to its rapid popularity, making it one of the most talked-about releases of the season. Reacting to the response, the producers expressed their delight, stating that the reception has exceeded their expectations. They highlighted that the phenomenal reaction clearly reflects Sunny Leone's strong fan following and star power, which continues to draw huge attention digitally.



Vrusshabha will mesmerize audiences with grand visuals: Bunny Vas

The pre-release event of the much-anticipated film Vrusshabha, starring Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, was held grandly in Hyderabad on Sunday. The high-budget pan-Indian film is set for a theatrical release on the 25th of this month through Geetha Film Distributors. Directed by Nandakishore, Vrusshabha has been simultaneously made in Malayalam and Telugu and is produced under the banners of Connekk Media, Balaji Telefilms, and Abhishek S Vyas Studios.

Speaking at the event, producer and distributor Bunny Vas said the film boasts grand making, strong emotional content, and stunning visuals that will mesmerize audiences. He revealed that the makers invested heavily in production quality and said the film reaches another level from the "King episode" onwards. Praising the performances, he said Samarjit Lankesh showed great ease as an actor and expressed confidence that he would emerge as a major star. Bunny Vas also highlighted the powerful action sequences, emotional depth, and impactful music com-

posed by Sam CS. Actors associated with the film shared their excitement and experiences. Balagam Sanjay called acting alongside Mohanlal an unforgettable experience and said the film's grandeur and CG work would impress audiences. Actress Nayan Sarika described Vrusshabha as a gripping and unpredictable

while hero Samarjit Lankesh said the film combines intense action with strong emotional elements centered on love and a father-son relationship.

Produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ekta Kapoor, and a team of noted producers, Vrusshabha features a multi-lingual cast and has been positioned as a true pan-



film with a mind-blowing climax, adding that she felt proud to make her Malayalam debut with such a prestigious project. Actor Ali praised director Nandakishore's track record and wished the team success,

India project. With strong buzz and multiple films releasing during the festive season, the makers expressed confidence that Vrusshabha will stand out and attract audiences to theates on the 25th.

Director Maruthi unveils Theatrical Trailer of 'Bad Girlz'

Bad Girlz' is an entertainer directed by Phani Pradeep Dhulipudi, who has previously directed the successful '30 Rojullo Premichadam Ela'. The film is being produced under the banners of Prashvitha Entertainment, Neeli Neeli Aakasam Creations, and NVL Creations. Anchal Gowda, Payal Chengappa, Roshini, Yashna, Rohan Surya, Moin and Rohan Surya are the main actors in 'Bad Girlz'. The tagline for the film, 'Kani Chala Manchodu', contradicts with the title in an interesting way. Sasidhar Nalla, Emmadi Soma Narsaiah, Ramisetti Rambabu, and Ravula Ramesh are producing this film. The film is slated for release as a Christmas gift on December 25.

Maruthi, the star director of Prabhas's upcoming film The Raja Saab, has released the theatrical trailer for this movie. Speaking on the occasion, the director said: "The trailer is very good and looks very promising. Director Phani Pradeep Dhulipudi (Munna) is a long-time friend of mine; he is a gentle soul in the industry and possesses great musical knowledge. Everyone knows how big of a hit the song 'Neeli Neeli Aakasham' from his first film

was. Now, he is coming before us with Bad Girlz. He has attempted to convey a good message in a fresh way. Making a film with five new actresses and completing it

how today's girls are, their way of thinking, and what they desire. Please watch it and support 'Bad Girls'."

Director Phani Pradeep Dhulipudi shared his excite-

ment about the project, stating: "Our film is a complete entertainer. Imagine the hilarious energy of films like Jathi Ratnalu and MAD, but featuring girls in those roles—that is exactly what our movie is. The film feels very new and fresh. Recently, director Buchi Babu Sana released our teaser, which received a fantastic response.



without compromising on production values is a testament to his passion. While the title is Bad Girlz, the film itself is very positive. The movie is releasing on December 25th, and everyone has worked very hard. Concept-based films like this, which give importance to women, must succeed. This film is based on the concept of

Christmas gift on December 25th. It is a solid entertainer with excellent music by Anup Rubens and lyrics for all songs penned by Oscar-winner Chandra Bose. Tracks like 'Ila Choosukuntane', 'Lelo', and the title song are already receiving great appreciation. Please watch it in theaters on December 25th."



Indian animated film Mission Santa set for global Christmas release

The Indian animated feature film Mission Santa is set for a worldwide theatrical release on December 25 as a special Christmas offering. Developed to international standards, the high-energy animated adventure will premiere simultaneously in India, France, Germany, and several other countries, including major cities across the Telugu-speaking states. Following the success of the animated film Narasimha Avatar, which received wide appreciation across India, Mission Santa marks another significant step forward for Indian animation. The film promises a rich cinematic experience with quality animation, emotional depth, fast-paced storytelling, and thrilling adventure, making it a complete family entertainer. According to the makers, Mission Santa is designed to appeal to audiences of all age groups—children, parents, and grandpar-

ents alike. Its highlights include stunning visual effects, engaging characters driven by courage and conviction, and a narrative that blends emotion with excitement. The film is also being projected as a milestone for the Indian animation industry. While the story, script, and character design were developed in Los Angeles, the entire animation production was executed in India under the supervision of senior animation experts. More than 150 Indian animation professionals worked on the project over a span of nearly 20 months. Produced by Broadvision India and Studio56, Mission Santa aims to elevate Indian animation from a service-based sector to a globally recognised creative force. Releasing in English, the film is expected to deliver a premium animated theatrical experience to audiences worldwide.